

Michigan Department of Education
Office of Field Services

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

2003-2004 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM GRANT PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Comprehensive School Reform Program is to provide financial incentives for schools that need to improve student achievement substantially, particularly Title I eligible schools, to implement comprehensive school reform programs that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and include an emphasis on basic academics and parental involvement. These programs are intended to stimulate schoolwide change covering virtually all aspects of school operation. Thus, to be considered comprehensive, a program must integrate, in a coherent manner, eleven specific criteria listed in the legislation. Through supporting comprehensive school reform, the program aims to enable all children in the schools selected, emphasizing low-achieving children, to meet challenging state content and student performance standards.

Types of Grants: Applications will be for one of two types of grants. Schools currently in the first year of a CSR grant may apply for a **“Continuation Grant.”** Schools seeking a first year grant will apply for a **“New Grant.”** Continuation grants will receive priority in the funding process. Monies left after the approval of continuation grants will be used to fund new grants. Grants will be for a minimum of \$50,000 per school. Consortia of smaller schools with a total enrollment of less than 500 students may apply for single grants per consortium with the same minimum of \$50,000.

PROJECT EMPHASIS

In order to address the intent of the federal legislation, the CSR application has been designed to provide information that will be used to determine each school’s level of eligibility for funding according to **two categories of selection criteria:** degree of **need for reform** and **quality of the comprehensive school reform plan**. Since the focus of the legislation is to stimulate schoolwide change in high-poverty schools that need to substantially improve student achievement, particularly Title I eligible schools, CSR grants will be competitively awarded for use in schools that have been determined to:

- Demonstrate the greatest need for comprehensive school reform, and
- Demonstrate the most promise for successful implementation and increased student achievement.

CRITERIA OF NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM

The criteria used to determine a school’s need for comprehensive reform are:

- High poverty
- Academic need

The specific eligibility criteria are as follows:

- 1) Schools in which fifty percent or more of the students enrolled are from low-income families will be eligible to apply for CSR grants. The basic measure of low-income used will be eligibility for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Act. However, schools that do not participate in this program or have counts that under-represent their actual low-income concentrations may use other comparable data to document their poverty status, such as census tract data or feeder school data for middle and high schools.
- 2) Funds allocated under Part F of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will be awarded to schools that:
 - Are eligible to participate in the Title I, Part A program;
 - Have a poverty concentration of fifty percent or more; and
 - If they are elementary or middle schools, have less than fifty percent of their students achieving at proficient levels in two or more of the following core academic subjects tested by the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP): mathematics, reading, science, and social studies (while writing is not included in the selection criteria, it will be expected to be included in comprehensive school reform plans);
 - If they are high schools, have less than fifty percent of their students achieving at proficient levels in three or more of the following subjects tested by MEAP: mathematics, reading, science, social studies, and writing.

Note: For MEAP tests with four achievement levels, Levels 1 and 2 are defined as proficient. For tests with two or three achievement levels, the highest level is defined as proficient.

- 3) Funds allocated under the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) in Part D of Title V of the ESEA will be awarded to schools that:
 - Are eligible to participate in the Title I, Part A program; and
 - Have a poverty concentration of fifty percent or more.

Low MEAP scores are not mandatory for Title V funding. This eligibility criterion for FIE funds will allow high-poverty schools that have been able to raise student achievement to access CSR funds to sustain their accomplishments through the adoption of a proven comprehensive school reform model.

- 4) Schools that meet the above criteria, but are already implementing an externally-developed comprehensive school reform model or an internally-developed comprehensive school reform program, will not be eligible to receive new CSR grants to continue the implementation of that model or program, since the purpose of CSR funding is to help schools initiate the implementation of a model program. Schools that received first-year CSR grants in 2002-2003 will be eligible for continuation grants in 2003-2004.

QUALITY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM PLAN

- 1) To be eligible for CSR funds, a school must intend to implement a high-quality, well-defined, research-based comprehensive school reform plan that integrates all required

components listed below. The integration of these components into a coherent design is what constitutes a truly comprehensive reform plan. Fragmented, piecemeal approaches that attempt to connect individual, unrelated models or strategies will not be eligible for funding. The required components are as follows:

- Effective, research-based methods and strategies for student learning, teaching, and school management.
 - Comprehensive design with aligned components for instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management.
 - High-quality and continuous professional development and training.
 - Measurable goals and benchmarks for student achievement of core academic curriculum standards aligned with state standards and benchmarks.
 - Support by school faculty, administrators, and other staff.
 - The provision of support for all school staff in the reform effort.
 - Parental and community involvement in planning and implementing school improvement activities.
 - High-quality, external technical support and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity.
 - Strategies to evaluate the implementation of the CSR program and the student results achieved.
 - Coordination of federal, state, and local resources to support and sustain the school reform.
 - Scientifically-based research and evidence demonstrates improved student achievement.
- 2) Evidence that the models or programs selected are aligned with the district's overall school improvement plan and state standards and will become part of a coherent, articulated educational program for pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.
- 3) Evidence that the district will provide leadership and ongoing support to the schools implementing CSR models or programs through: i) community engagement; ii) support for high quality and continuity in school-level administrative leadership for the duration of the grant period (School districts are strongly encouraged to not transfer principals in schools selected for a CSR grant during the term of the grant.); iii) budget and staffing flexibility; iv) alignment of professional development activities; and v) technical support in securing assistance from external design teams or other providers.
- 4) Evidence that general funds and state and federal categorical funds will be reallocated and district policies will be developed as needed to support long-term implementation of the models or programs selected.
- 5) Evidence that the district has developed a plan to evaluate the implementation of CSR programs in its schools and to measure changes in student achievement of the core academic curriculum using state assessment tests and other indicators of achievement.

This evidence should include an assurance that the selected schools will actively participate in state and federal evaluation processes. **Failure to participate in state evaluation processes will eliminate schools from the continuation grant process.**

Continuation grants: Applications for continuation grants must provide a written narrative reporting their progress on item 1 above for the school plan and items 2-5 for the district plan, as proposed in their previous application.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will give competitive preference to schools selecting externally developed CSR models that can provide evidence of effective implementation with the assistance of external design teams or other providers, as well as evidence of replicability in a variety of schools. For first year grant applicants, ten (10) preference points will be awarded for the selection of an externally developed CSR model. The MDE has reviewed the evidence for effectiveness of models included in the *Catalog of School Reform Models* produced jointly by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) and the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR) and accepted this evidence as adequate to meet these standards. Models that are not included in the catalog will be required to submit information comparable to that supplied in the catalog. The MDE will screen these models to make sure they meet the “most rigorous” or “somewhat rigorous” standards described in the *Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness* from the CSR Guidance. This evidence must be submitted a minimum of two weeks prior to submitting the application in order to permit a timely review and decision. A list of models included in the NWREL catalog and other models approved by MDE is given in the “Help” for the page “New and Continuation CSR Grant Applicant Schools.”

In selecting recipients, the MDE will also consider the grade levels served by the school and the location of the school to ensure that CSR programs are representative of schools serving different grade levels and parts of the state, including rural and urban communities. The MDE will also consider the networking and support potential of selecting groups in a district or region implementing the same model.

LENGTH OF AWARD

Funding will be effective July 1, 2003, with an ending date of September 30, 2004. Depending on the availability of future congressional appropriations, a school may receive support for three years. That is, an initial award to a school district for a particular school would be renewable for two additional years.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Application Submission Deadline: The deadline for the submission of the 2003-04 CSR application is **11:59 p.m., Friday, March 7, 2003**. MEGS will record the date and time the application is successfully submitted. Failure to submit the application by the application deadline will result in rejection of the application. Applications cannot be submitted in MEGS until all errors have been corrected. Applicants are advised to submit their application no later than 5:00 p.m., March 7, 2003, to allow for delays that may occur in the electronic grants system.